



# News Release

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## **Diploma mill: phony degrees lead to charges for three health care providers**

*Bogus degrees purchased online*

**OLYMPIA** — The Department of Health has charged three health care providers with unprofessional conduct for using bogus degrees from diploma mills in their practice.

Michael Strub (LW00004263), a licensed social worker, allegedly bought a Doctor of Philosophy in Psychology (Ph.D.) diploma and transcript in March 2004. He got it from Hamilton University, an online diploma mill. Charges say Strub misrepresented his education and training to clients and insurance companies.

David Larsen (RC00021390, CP00000530), a registered counselor and chemical dependency professional, bought a Doctor of Psychology (Psy.D.) degree in October 2002. He purchased it from St. Regis University, another online diploma mill. Larsen didn't complete an academic program or course work through St. Regis. He allegedly misrepresented his education and training on a resume he submitted for a counselor position in August 2004. Larsen was known as "Dr. Larsen" at that agency by staff and clients.

Taylor Danard (RC00013399), registered counselor, purchased a Doctor of Philosophy in Psychology (Ph.D.) degree from St. Regis University in January 2003. From 2003 to July 2008, Danard allegedly misrepresented her education and training by referring to herself as a Ph.D. in her practice. Danard didn't complete an academic program or course work from St. Regis. Charging papers say she provided false information to a Department of Health investigator.

The department investigated four other health care providers who got credentials using diploma mills. These four other providers didn't use the degrees during their application processes or in their practices, so those cases have been closed without disciplinary action.

—More—

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Consumers who believe a health care provider acted unprofessionally are encouraged to call the Department of Health at 360-236-4700 to report their complaint. [A complaint can also be filed online](http://www.doh.wa.gov/hsqa/Complaint.htm) (<http://www.doh.wa.gov/hsqa/Complaint.htm>) at the agency's Web site.

The Department of Health protects and promotes public health, safety, and welfare in Washington by regulating the competency and quality of health care providers. It establishes, monitors, and enforces qualifications for licensing, consistent standards of practice, continuing competency mechanisms, and discipline. Rules, policies, and procedures are developed to promote the delivery of quality health care to people in Washington.

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Visit the Washington Department of Health Web site at <a href="http://www.doh.wa.gov">http://www.doh.wa.gov</a> for <i>a healthy dose of information</i> .
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